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Daimler share price falls after report of involvement in U.S. "dieselgate" scandal

Xinhua, February 20, 2018

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BERLIN, Feb. 19 (Xinhua) -- Daimler AG's share price on the DAX stock exchange fell by two percent to 71.06 euros (88.01 U.S. dollars) on Monday following a report that the German luxury carmaker was being targeted by U.S. authorities in the ongoing "dieselgate" scandal.

Despite upbeat overall trading, other automotive firms listed in Frankfurt, including BMW (minus 0.5 percent), also suffered slight losses.

On Sunday, the German newspaper Bild cited confidential information compiled in a joint investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and environmental agencies which suggested that Daimler played a greater role in the diesel emission-cheating scandal than previously acknowledged.

According to the documents, investigators discovered several software functions in Daimler's diesel fleet which were allegedly illegally installed to falsify readings of nitrogen oxide emissions.

Bild wrote that in the case of Mercedes-Benz "Vito" vans, the actual nitrogen oxide levels were ten times as high during everyday use as those recorded in official test settings.

The Stuttgart-based manufacturer said it was unable to comment on the ongoing investigation as it had guaranteed the U.S. Department of Justice "full confidentiality".

Daimler's chief executive officer Dieter Zetsche has repeatedly insisted that unlike its rival Volkswagen, his firm was not guilty of any "cheating".

"We have been cooperating fully for more than two years and are ensuring complete transparency," a statement by Daimler read. A company spokesperson further noted that U.S. authorities had already been aware of the information published. Enditem

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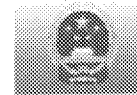
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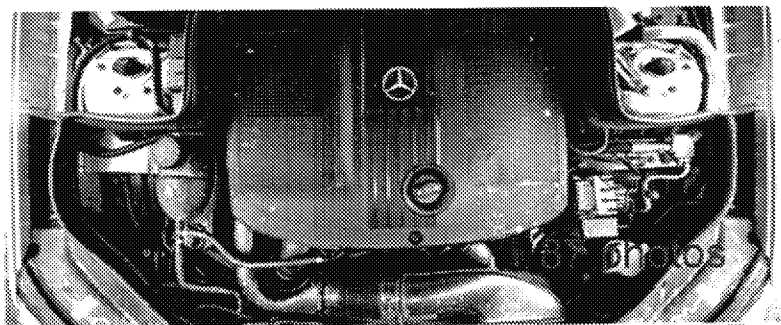
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Mercedes Diesel Engine Possible Defeat Software Found During Investigation

/ Home / News / Industry 19 Feb 2018, 11:08 UTC · by Vlad Mitache

With the flames of Volkswagen's Dieselgate scandal almost extinguished, it looks like the fire is about to ignite once more, this time closer to the South of Germany.



Once the Wolfsburg-based manufacturer was caught red-handed with its diesel defeat devices, a lot of people in the know said VW wasn't the only one to use them. Almost all major European carmakers have had to answer a few questions, but they weren't all faced with full official investigations.

Daimler and its Mercedes-Benz brand weren't as lucky, so U.S. investigators are still digging to find whether the diesel-powered cars sold in the country had special software installed that would limit the vehicle's emissions during lab testing.

According to Bild am Sonntag (via Automotive News Europe), the officials might have stumbled upon something. They say the

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engine management software had a function called "slipguard" that was able to tell when the car was being subjected to lab tests, and while that isn't incriminatory in itself, it certainly raises a few questions.

Especially since it wasn't the only thing the investigators have come across. Another function, this time called "Bit 15," would cut off any emissions cleaning after 26 kilometers (16 miles) of driving, meaning the Mercedes-Benz diesel was just as clean as a similar vehicle from decades ago.

In fact, the publication says this software feature allowed the vehicles to emit up to ten times the allowed quantities of nitrous oxides into the atmosphere, and we all know NOx emissions weren't that strictly regulated before Dieselgate anyway.

Daimler officials have refused to comment on the situation citing the confidentiality of the ongoing investigation, but one spokesperson did say this: *"The authorities know the documents and no complaint has been filed. The documents available to Bild have obviously selectively been released in order to harm Daimler and its 290,000 employees."* Funny how they managed to slip the 290,000 employees in there, effectively using them as a human shield against any possible penalties. *"You're not punishing the company, you're also hitting hard at 290,000 people who had nothing to do with it,"* they seem to be saying.

Nobody is in any doubt over whether carmakers actually care about how much their vehicles pollute, or they just do whatever it takes to pass the tests and don't bother with what happens once they end up in the real world. But if these allegations prove to be correct, depending on how wide-spread they are, Mercedes-Benz might suffer a fate similar to that of Volkswagen's.

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By Graeme Roberts | 19 February 2018

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Investigators in the US enquiring into Daimler's Mercedes-Benz brand found cars had software which may have help them to pass diesel emissions tests, weekend media reports said.

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Reuters cited a *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper report which said confidential documents showed the investigators had found several software functions that helped Daimler cars pass emissions tests, including one which switched off emissions cleaning after 26km of driving.

Another function allowed the emissions control system to determine if the car was being tested based on speed or acceleration patterns.

Bild am Sonntag also cited emails from Daimler engineers questioning whether those software functions were legal.

A Daimler spokesman declined to comment to Reuters on the content of the documents but said the automaker was cooperating fully with US authorities and had agreed upon strict confidentiality with the Department of Justice.

"The authorities know the documents and no complaint has been filed," the spokesman said.

"The documents available to *Bild* have obviously selectively been released in order to harm Daimler and its 290,000 employees."



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Daimler is facing ongoing investigations by US and German authorities into excess emissions and has acknowledged investigations could lead to significant penalties and recalls, Reuters noted.

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